

Yellowknife South Constituency Meeting  
Google Meet  
March 8, 2021

1. Welcome

- a. Session Scheduling: the Legislative Assembly has created a more firm schedule for timing of how long Session and Committee of the Whole will run for. On Tuesdays, Session will go until 8pm (which was why we had to move our meeting to Monday), and all other nights of Session we will go to around 6 pm. This allows those with children to better prepare and organise child care.
- b. Overview of agenda
- c. Rule of MLA vs. Minister – if an issue that you are bringing to us is HR or Finance – vendor payments, invoices, Sarah keeps a line between Minister to MLA, it basically works out as me emailing me... Sarah provides the front end service to the constituent so that I can action on the Minister side.
  - i. We have had a few requests from constituents asking for me to bring their concerns to the floor of the House during Session, as a Minister this means that in the House I cannot make statements on the floor that challenges or is contrary to government. If someone has an issue that needs advocacy on the floor, we give them a surrogate on the floor, this hasn't happened yet but have used other MLAs internally for in persona meetings with Ministers. In all issues so far we have been able to work through our Yellowknife South Office and Ministers' offices directly to address your concerns. While you cannot see it, I also use opportunities as a Minister to raise issues and concerns within government.
  - ii. Never want a constituent to have "special" access to my Ministerial role but also do not ever want a constituent to feel that they have less access or less of a voice; it will be equitable for all people.
- d. Happy International Women's Day
  - i. Proposed Gender Equity Unit, right now as Minister for Status of Women, there is no real department, no staff, kind of a coordinating political figure, coordinating resources in different departments, this will now be a unit and resources within it, and staff persons to actually do the work, gender based analysis, and all identify features and how we spend our money and make decisions, work around of MMIWG, family violence and prevention. Once budget is approved then we will see if that roles out, most people are supportive of this.

2. What the Constituency Office has been up to:

- a. Guiding people through the COVID-19 Vaccination Process
  - i. Who is eligible, how to book, how to cancel, out of territory resident issues.
  - ii. Thoughtful question on how we can make things better, how to get better parking, to whose on the priority list. A lot of time spent there. There is a fair bit of information available online. If you have a particular questions or need, we might actually know that if it is not online, or ask it of the health office.
- b. Assisting people through COVID-19 Isolation Changes
  - i. Offering ideas on what to change and how to change, and safety for masks of people at the centres, and looking out for the protection of the workers there.

- ii. Most people situation is normally clear, but some personal circumstances make it a little different and require questions to Minister.
  - c. Most issues coming into the office are around personal issues with Health and Social Services or Human Resources.
    - i. Just need supports navigating the system and needing support. Sarah is the first point of contact for those so I can wear my Minister hat.
  - d. A few more people are starting to use our office for notarising documents in time for tax season and government renewal papers. If you need documents notarised you can contact our office to arrange a time to come into the Leg to work with Sarah.
  - e. Questions we are asked are really helpful and change the system so don't be afraid to ask or submit ideas.
- 3. Questions from Constituents:
  - a. Red Tape Working Group Committee:
    - i. Constituent Question: Is this working group the extent of industry consultation or the group that is responsible to organize consultations?  
Caroline's Response:
      1. No it is not, the creation of the group is the body that creates and collates the list, with their own knowledge of industry and regions, making sure they are reaching out to all the right parties,
      2. Red tape to small businesses, I'm sure there are many rules with red tape in government, but right now it is for small and medium businesses. Fire marshal offices, to tourism license, to land registry offices, anything that relates to small or medium.
      3. One meeting so far, organisational structuring, can tell you that there are talks within finance to make ourselves available to gather that information, it is rolling out right away. The goal that I had set was to make changes in time for June session. Only a few months away, some of the changes to be proposed to us probably do take only a few small changes to happen.
      4. Please bring forward any instances of red tape that you have experienced. And we will bring them forward.
      5. Finance is lead in term of government for it.
      6. Can send to Sarah or to me directly.
    - ii. Constituent Question: If this group is the extent of the consultations will there be an opportunity to revisit this with a more representative and robust group of industries present prior to the red tape reduction work occurring?  
Caroline's Response:
      1. Again, this is not the extent of the consultations. This is the group that will be the point of contact.
      2. Finance is the chair, together with representation from ITI , infrastructure, business advisory council, regional chamber of commerce, and includes people both from YK and outside YK.
  - b. Open Questions to group
    - i. Constituent Comment: Fire services on the Ingraham Trail, there is another side to that story. I have been a cabin owner 30 + years, and no promises were ever made to those who purchased land or got leases. These leases are supposed to be recreational, not permanent residencies. A lot of them are water access. I

don't want taxes to be impacted. Where do we draw the line for water coverage? Unfair that people who are not supposed to be living out there full time. I have friends, and I have things out there. But it is not the responsibility of the government. Just because they have a road why should they get preference. Summer ENR will respond if it is a concern, the rest of the year you take the risk. Just because you don't hear the other viewpoint there.

Caroline's Response: Yellowknife North MLA Johnson brings it up for the ridding. No one is being contrary on the floor. The questions that get asked on the floor normally come in with one angle. It's more informing instead of debating. It is more of advocating. That isn't to say that that Lands and MACA, ENR are not live to. But I appreciate hearing it.

c. Further points from Caroline:

- i. Procurement Review that is going on. Businesses from all sizes and territory. That is happening now. If you have dealt with government on any level with procurement, let me know what we can do better. Panel process up until summer. EIA would be longer. Recommendation over summer.
- ii. HR is a frequent source of constituency inquiries, questions in the house. Today Finance launched living well together training. GNWT employee or not, you can access the training. 10 hours of training. Interviews with people around the territory. It will be available for the public.
- iii. Liquor Act review. Out this month.
- iv. Economic Development, ITI side. Tourism 2025 coming out soon, five year strategy. Fortunately they had time in COVID where they were able to go back out and do some more engagement for COVID aware tourism strategy.
- v. Mineral Resource Act and regulations, delayed from COVID but moving forward.
- vi. Fishing industry gaining program, fishers on North shore of the lake.
- vii. Agriculture has had some momentum, south of the lake has more momentum, but we are starting to get more interest. All kinds of different producers, how they could grow their business, regulations that are blocking the growth of your industry.
- viii. MMIWG area of significant plan, return to Calls for Justice.
- ix. Public Lands Act is also rolling out right now to modernise that
- x. Educational Modernisation Act
- xi. Aurora College is ticking along, to become a Polytechnique, on track.
- xii. Health, COVID focussed, managing health care sector and units. Vaccine roll out. A lot of people writing in. People are frustrated, understandable. On track for 75% for April. Good news story for us, hoping the rest of Canada can catch up. Parks open – on target for May, not early. It cost 200k to stay open that extra bit at the end of the season last year. Costs of it against those who are interested, not strong. We did go back to see if we can open some early. For now they will be at least on time for May long weekend.
- xiii. YKMLAs meet with school boards and city council before each session. Relationships are strong and positive, a lot of issues.
- xiv. DOJ would have been in the news recently, joint human resources working group, and union. High Level working group and the home department, and the union, has not been done before. Hopeful that this will see some change in the workplace, jail.

- xv. HSS, continue to manage Stanton Hospital, resolved with P3 partner, because they were able to step in.
  - xvi. Child family services, quite a number of resources are going in there. A lot of proposals in this budget. How the public service is growing is in large part in support of family and child services.
  - xvii. Because we are a minority, we have to engage with all MLAs on the budget, majority have to be happy with that they pass it. Process is still ongoing. We have this week and three days after March break.
  - xviii. Handful of bills that are coming into the house, not huge or complex pieces of legislation, change to employment standards including when large companies give notice, income tax, highways act.
  - xix. Last thought. Anyone following the Legislature? There was comment on that we are not moving legislation in through fast enough. 18<sup>th</sup> assembly things got backed right up, there were some slowdowns on the consultation front, expectations on consolation of public, used to go out on an airplane and engage the public. This has all had to change because of COVID. What I gather, most departments are getting back on track. Delay but not to the point that work has been ceased. Some have been accelerated, Liquor Act, Mineral Resource Act, and Modernisation of Education Act. So they are happening.
- d. Constituent Question: Any progress on economic recovery plan? What is the ETA on that? Is it still happening?

Caroline's Response: Believe the premier spoke to this in Session, it is multi department, being lead out of EIA. Premier's shop. They are the lead. I think the target is to be ready by end of this Session. Don't know what they mean by ready, not sure what level of finality it will be made, if not a document, then a date by end of Session. They are actively working on it.

- i. Constituent Question: As the vaccines roll out in the NWT, what point to we start easing restriction in the NWT? Example, youth sports, have a lot of restrictions on them, discussion with the OCPHO is always risk of spreading at these events. As the vaccine rolls out and herd immunity starts, when can we expect these to be lifted? What role as our MLA do you have in bringing these forward? At some point we need to ensure that people's voices are being heard. We want to make sure that the proper decisions are being made.

Caroline's Response: I've got kids in sports, and the lifestyle, I understand, the friends coming. I can tell you I am worried for peoples mental wellbeing. Parents can't go watch our kid play hockey. That said, I don't have an easy answer for you. When Emerging Wisely came out in June, with the restrictions lifted, I looked back at it recently. It no longer fits the situation. Vaccines roll out vs Canadian, and things that were supposed to be restricted aren't. CPHO is constantly looking at risk. The office looks at these issues, the one off changes that they are seeing are not what the public is looking for. I know she is having those considerations. Second wave in the fall, and then Fort Liard, and then GK. Role that I play as your MLA, and what all MLAs are playing. Sending in these questions, pressure on the Minister of Health. None of us want to see pressure on science based questions. Also there is that role in decision making and implementation of these rules. Minister of Finance, Health do meet

regularly with them on how we implement these orders and support, and where the government goes next. It is weekly. 100 % risk assessment, but policy and implementation. When does the medical model allow? People need to see something positive right now.

Constituent Question: The parents' frustration is hitting our volunteers. As the person who has to remain neutral, people do make good points, and our volunteers are getting harassed now. It's getting hard on our volunteers; we do meet with the CPHO regularly. We're just not making headway quick enough. Caroline's Response: You can still raise it with us. Or just let us know of particular area of struggle. Everyone in government people are quite conscious of having these conversations. The line not to cross is to tell medical professionals do as we say. Politics will not drive this.

Constituent: Completely agree with you on that. Hopefully we get there quick.

- ii. Constituent Question: A lot of money is being spent on squatting cabins; why is that occurring? Illegal usages, or maybe trying to look at it a legal way? Address squatting, but not the root cause as to why there are so many.

Caroline's Response: Why this first? Land Access. Trying to work with municipalities to get land access.

The bigger simple thing is settling land claims, and then land use plans. Getting squatters off. This is not an easy one to figure out. Active movement in Lands, this has been around for a long time.

4. Conclusion:

- a. Thank you to all who participated, and remember, if you ever have any questions or ideas please do not hesitate to get in contact with our office.